

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 FRB-03

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PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /064 W

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R 130037Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7253

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

USDEL MTN GENEVA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: DECEMBER UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES PRESENT MIXED BAG

REF: 75 CANBERRA 8189, 75 CANBERRA 7542, 75 CANBERRA 6736,
75 CANBERRA 6048

1. MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS STREET
ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 9 THAT THE UNADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT
FOR DECEMBER WAS 328,705, OR 5.6 PCT OF WORK FORCE,
AS AGAINST 4.5 PCT IN NOVEMBER. THE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED
FIGURE, WHICH AS IN NOVEMBER IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT ACCORDING
TO COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN, REMAINED VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED
AT JUST OVER 4.8 PCT.

2. AS WAS EXPECTED, 65 PCT OF NEW JOBLESS FOR DECEMBER
CONSISTED OF SCHOOL LEAVERS. IT IS ALSO EXPECTED THAT
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THIS GROUP WILL HELP SWELL TOTAL JOBLESS IN JANUARY TO

BETWEEN 370,000 AND 390,000. THIS NOT FAR FROM
SEPTEMBER ESTIMATE OF 400,000 UNEMPLOYED IN JANUARY
MADE BY FORMER MINISTER OF LABOR MCCLELLAND.

3. SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNFILLED VACANCIES FAILED TO
FOLLOW FAVORABLE INCREASE REGISTERED IN NOVEMBER AND
ACTUALLY FELL SLIGHTLY. ON OTHER HAND, APPROXIMATELY
3,300 FORMER EMPLOYEES OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(RED) SCHEME FOUND JOBS AND ONLY 200 ADDED TO JOBLESS
ROLLS.

4. AS AN INDICATION THAT GENERAL EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS
MAY BE ON THE MEND, LEAVING SCHOOL LEAVERS ASIDE, THE
JUST RELEASED ANZ BANK EMPLOYMENT ADVERTISEMENT SERIES
(WIDELY REGARDED LOCALLY AN IMPORTANT LEADING INDICATOR)
SHOWED A 6.9 PCT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED GAIN FOR DECEMBER,
ITS BEST INCREASE SINCE FEBRUARY 1973. THE BANK, WHICH
GENERALLY REFRAINS FROM COMMENTING ON THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE FIGURES IT REPORTS, STATED THAT "THE MAGNITUDE
OF THE DECEMBER INCREASE (FOLLOWING TWO CONSECUTIVE
MONTHLY INCREASES) SUGGESTS THAT A TURNING POINT IN THE
CYCLE OF LABOR DEMAND MAY HAVE BEEN REACHED AND THAT
EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE NOW IMPROVING". AT SAME TIME,
OFFICIAL FIGURES SHOWED SLIGHT INCREASE IN SEASONALLY
ADJUSTED FIGURES FOR OVERTIME WORKED.

5. COMMENT: SCHOOL LEAVERS-LED SURGE IN UNADJUSTED
FIGURES WAS EXPECTED, AND IN FACT MAY BE SLIGHTLY
SMALLER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORESEEN. MINISTER STREET
CAUTIOUSLY RESTRICTED HIS REMARKS TO STATEMENT THAT
"I WOULD EXPECT ACTUAL UNEMPLOYMENT TO FALL STEADILY
BUT GRADUALLY--NOT AT A DRAMATIC RATE". IT IS EXPECTED
THAT STATE OF LABOR MARKET WILL BE KEY TOPIC IN TALKS
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS AND UNIONS SCHEDULED TO
TAKE PLACE IN MELBOURNE ON FRIDAY JANUARY 16.
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